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Drug Enforcement Administration

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For Immediate Release

DEA Serves A Suspension Order On Walgreens Distribution Center In Jupiter, Florida

MIAMI - Mark R. Trouville, Special Agent in Charge of the Miami Field Division, Drug Enforcement (DEA), announced today the issuance of an Immediate Suspension (ISO) at Walgreens Distribution Center located at 15998 Walgreens Drive, Jupiter, ("Walgreens Jupiter"). An ISO is served pursuant to Section 303 and 304 of the Controlled Substances Act, Title 21 U.S.C. § 823 and 824 when a DEA-registered business or ("registrant") constitutes an imminent danger to the public safety and suspends a registrant's ability to handle or distribute a controlled substance such as oxycodone, hydrocodone and others pending a judicial proceeding.

DEA Special Agent in Charge Mark R. Trouville said, "The diversion of pharmaceutical controlled substances is a great concern for the DEA. All DEA Registrants have an obligation to ensure that medications are getting into the hands of legitimate patients, and when they choose to look the other way patients suffer and drug dealers prosper. The Miami Field Division will continue to investigate all those who contribute to this intolerable situation and deal with them accordingly."

The Walgreens Jupiter is one of twelve distribution centers owned and operated by the Walgreens Corporation in Deerfield, Illinois, which is also the parent company to more than 7800 Walgreens retail pharmacies in the United States. The Walgreens Jupiter distributes controlled substances exclusively to its own Walgreens pharmacies located on the east coast of the United States, including the state of Florida.

Since 2009, Walgreens Jupiter has been the single largest distributor of oxycodone products in Florida. At about the same time as the abuse of prescription drugs became an epidemic in Florida, Walgreens' Florida retail pharmacies, supplied by Walgreens Jupiter, commanded an increasingly large percentage of the oxycodone business. In 2010, only three Walgreens retail pharmacies were in the top 100 purchasers of oxycodone within Florida. In 2011, 38 Walgreens pharmacies made the top 100 and six were in the top 10. Through May 2012, 52 Walgreens pharmacies are in the top 100 oxycodone purchasers, eight in the top 15 and five in the top 10. According to DEA records, in 2011, Walgreens operated 7862 retail pharmacies in the U.S. and 16 of the top 25 largest oxycodone purchasers by Walgreens retail

pharmacies, including the top six purchasers, were in Florida and supplied by the Jupiter Distribution Center. In 2011, the average pharmacy in the U.S. ordered approximately 73,000 oxycodone dosage units. The following table shows these six stores and their yearly oxycodone purchases for 2009 through 2011:

Oxycodone Purchases by Dosage Unit

Oxycodone is a Schedule II controlled substance which is highly addictive and known to be highly abused and diverted in the state of Florida. According to the 2010 Florida Medical Examiner's Commission Drug Report, the drug that caused the most deaths in the state of Florida for 2010 was (1,516 deaths).

On April 4, 2012, the DEA Miami Field Division served an Administrative Inspection (AIW) on Walgreens Jupiter and its top six retail pharmacies in Florida. These administrative actions were to determine if these Walgreens' maintained a system in place that detects and reports suspicious orders to the DEA to prevent the diversion of control substances as governed by federal laws and the Control Substance Act relating to the proper distribution of control substances.

Based on the ongoing investigation and the evidence gathered from the AIW, the ISO against Walgreens Jupiter, alleges that this distribution center failed to maintain effective controls against the diversion of controlled substances into other than legitimate medical, scientific, and industrial channels, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 823(b)(1) (e)(1). Furthermore, it alleges that Walgreens Jupiter failed to conduct due diligence to ensure that the controlled substances were not diverted into other than legitimate channels.

Today's action only applies to Walgreens Jupiter Distribution Center and only suspends the distribution of controlled substances in Schedule II to Schedule V and will not affect non-controlled pharmaceutical drugs.

The Walgreen's Corporation will be given an opportunity for an administrative hearing to determine whether the DEA Certificate of Registration at the Walgreen's Jupiter Distribution Center location should be revoked. The final decision will be published in the Federal Register.







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